

ANTHROPOLOGICAL QUARTERLY

Publication of The Catholic Anthropological Conference

APRIL, 1957

Editor
Regina Flannery

*Associate
Editors*

Martin Gusinde, S.V.D.
Gottfried O. Lang

*Advisory
Board*

Hugh Bihler, S.J.
Jean Comhaire
John Putnam, M.M.

*Business
Manager*
James A. Magner

CONTENTS

CATHOLIC HYMNS OF
MICHIGAN INDIANS
GERTRUDE PROKOSCH KURATH — 31

AFRICAN "POWERS" IN
TRINIDAD: THE SHANGO CULT
FRANCES MISCHEL 45

Edited by the Department of Anthropology, The Catholic University of America.

Published quarterly, January, April, July, and October, by The Catholic University of America Press, Washington 17, D.C. Subscription price: Yearly \$3.00. Single number 75 cents.

Business communications, including subscriptions and changes of address, should be addressed to The Catholic University of America Press, Washington 17, D.C. Please address all manuscripts and editorial correspondence to the Editor, Department of Anthropology, The Catholic University of America, Washington 17, D.C.

(Special Reprinting - July 1964)



CATHOLIC HYMNS OF MICHIGAN INDIANS

GERTRUDE PROKOSCH KURATH
Ann Arbor, Michigan

In the rush to preserve the native cultural fragments of the American Indian, ethnologists and musicologists have tended to neglect or scorn semi-Christian aspects. Lately the students of ethnology have awakened to the importance of culture mixtures termed acculturation, but musicians lag behind. To my knowledge only Willard Rhodes is aware of the rich fund of Indian hymnody. During my four years of work among the Algonquian Indians of Michigan¹ I would have been blind and deaf to escape this type of music, for it plays a profound role in the lives of these Christian Indians.

Three centuries after their sight of the first blackrobe missionary they color their Christianity with pagan fragments, but they have effectively submerged this paganism. A generation ago all of the Catholics celebrated semi-pagan feasts on Catholic holidays and sang perplexing hymns in their native language. Now only the older people know the hymns, confined to wakes and family feasts. In the Upper Peninsula the feasts have all but disappeared but in the Lower Peninsula they survive among the Ottawa of Little Traverse Bay, L'Arbre Croche of the French. This scenic Ottawa metropolis, settled as a mission in 1742, still extends from Cross Village on Lake Michigan to Petoskey.

The calendar of family feasts begins with the New-Year-Epiphany celebration, which is complimented by a return called

¹ Field work from 1953-1956 was supported by grants from the Michigan Academy of Science and the American Philosophical Society. The Library of the American Philosophical Society has on deposit a detailed report and copies of recordings by the author and by Jane Ettawageshik, from the recent materials and from the latter author's 1946-1947 field work. The Ethnic Folkways Monograph and LP 1003 contains some hymns and the two quoted native songs.

Tabandang. It now omits Corpus Christi and other former summer festivals and skips to the Ghost Suppers after November 1: A child's Naming Ceremony and a wake can come at any time. Other celebrations as Christmas, birthdays, weddings, etc. are typically European. Just as the weekly Sunday services, they contain the same liturgies and hymns as in white churches. (Communication, Jane Ettawageshik).

The bilingual Algonquians sing by heart, in unison, usually a cappella, occasionally with piano accompaniment. For the texts they have to consult battered heirlooms, hymnals printed a century ago without the melodies. The arrangement of these hymnals shows how the Anamie-nagamonan (prayer songs) were adapted to every event in the Catholic calendar and to every act of worship. They were devised for Kitchi-ogimagijigak (New Year), Eukaristiwin (Eucharist), Tchibaigijigad (All Souls' Day), Niba-anamiegijigad (Christmas), for eulogies to Jesus and the Blessed Virgin, Kitchitwa Marie. Any can be adapted to a wake.

Whereas the Ottawa share texts with the Ojibwa near Sault Ste. Marie, Nahma on Lake Michigan, Baraga on Lake Superior and other Upper Peninsula settlements, they sing other tunes. Sometimes they use entirely different melodies, sometimes variants of the same tune. Versions vary between adjacent locations as Burt Lake and L'Arbre Croche, and even between individuals. This has been remarked by the Ottawa themselves and by a friend of the Indians and hymn collector, the Jesuit priest Fr. Paul Prud'homme. In a music collection published in 1931 by Fr. Prud'homme and Fr. Desautels many texts have alternate melodies.² They have other melodies again on the tapes I recorded with David Kenosha, Susan Shagonaby, Eliza Kishigo, Hattie Sagataw of L'Arbre Croche and Thomas Shalifoe of Baraga, and on the wires Jane Ettawageshik recorded among the Ottawa. Other unrecorded variants were heard in the course of talks with Mary Weeden of Nahma and Margaret Lambert of St. Ignace.

² Père Paul Prud'homme and Père Desautels, *Anamie-Nagamonan*, Nipigon, Ontario, 1931.

This variation, which is a characteristic of folk music as well as of nineteenth century hymn singing practices, is interesting in itself. It also plays a part in unravelling the development which has been forgotten even by the oldest Indians and by the most assiduous prelates.



Two typical hymns, recorded by David Kenosha and Susan Shagonaby, were formerly intended for Christmas (Ex. 1) and for the Blessed Virgin Mary (Ex. 2). Their central ideas, as translated by Fred Ettawageshik, are much akin.

Ex. 1.

Kakina minawasida
Ki mino nondagemin:
Kinawind gi-ondji-nigi,
Kije-manito Ogowissan.

Chorus.

Ogowissan, Ogowissan
Kije-manito Ogowissan.

Ex. 2.

Kagenig Kije-manito
Kigi-bisagiig, Marie;
Bwa mashi ondadissiyan
Ki gi-makwenimig.

Chorus.

Gagangowiiian
Marie eninijiminang,
Gwanatchiwiian,
Nadamawishinam.

All let us make merry
He was pleased to hear us:
For us he was reborn,
The Holy Spirit's Son.

The Son, the Son,
The Holy Spirit's Son.

Always, Holy Spirit,
She loved you, Mary;
Before you were born
He thought of you who are a virgin.

You who are a virgin
Mary who is like us,
Who is beautiful,
Help us.

Both hymns, as also all others, have many more verses, pressing the native language into European metre.

That is to say, it looks like European metre and song pattern. The examples are in regular 4/4 and 3/4 time, respectively, marked off into groups of four measures, which cluster into two parts, with B as chorus. The only departure from this regularity is the Chorus of Ex. 2, with phrases of seven, six, and three measures. The printed melody, despite variations, has a similar phrasing. For Ex. 1 the book brings two quite different tunes.³ All are in a major diatonic scale, with rising and falling contour.

³ *ibid.*, p. 174.

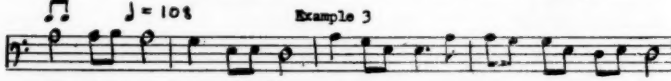
Example 1
 A $J = 100$

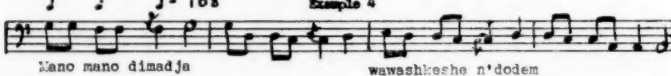
 Kakina mina - wasi- da Ki mi-no nondage - min
 Ki - nawind ondji - ni-gi Ki- je manito ogwis-san
 B $J = 100$

 Ogwissan Ogwissan Ki-je mani - to Ogwis - san

Example 2
 $J = 96$

 Ka-ge-nig Ki - je ma-ni-to Ki-gi-bi-sa - gi- ig Ma-rie
 Bwa ma-shi on - da -dis-siyan Ki gi-makwen - i - mig -
 Ga- gan - go-wii - an Ma-rie en- i - ni - ji - mi-nang Gwanachi-
 wii -an Na-da- ma - wi - shi-nam Na - da - ma-wi - shi - nam

Example 3
 $J = 108$

 B'neshi-wog to-gosho-nog

Example 4
 $J = 108$

 Mano mano dimadja wawashkeshe n'dodem

The first question is the relationship of these qualities to the typical patterns of native songs known to a few singers. Ex. 3 is the first phrase of an Eagle Dance song by David Kenosha, Ex. 4 is one verse of a Deer Song by Thomas Shalifoe. Every song should be rendered four times, the sacred number of the Algonquians. Metre and phrasing of both songs are orderly but

not cut-and-dried. Ex. 4 resembles Ex. 1 in the sequential recurrence of a theme consisting of even quarter and eighth notes. But the sequences of the hymns rise and fall; in all native songs they descend. Thus Ex. 2, which starts on its highest note, is quite unlike the animal songs, what with its many ups and downs.

There are other differences. The native songs are accompanied by a duple drum beat and adhere to a strict tempo, while the hymns, sung a cappella, may be rubato especially at the end. The native songs are rendered with a light, staccato touch, the hymns heavy and legato.

The most striking differences are apparent in the scales. The native songs have compact pentatonic scales with the tonic at the bottom. The hymns dispose their diatonic scales both sides of the tonic, Ex. 2 even dangling an octave below. They are here tabulated in ascending order, notwithstanding the descending native contour. The "gaps" in the pentatonic scales bypass all semitones. Ex. 3 omits the third, hence any affiliations with our major or minor.

Ex. 1	<u>5 6 7</u> 1 2 3 4 5
Ex. 2	<u>2 3 4 5 6 7</u> 1 2 3 4 5
Ex. 3	1 2 4 5 6
Ex. 4	1 3 4 5 7 8

The texts and their ideology show even greater contrasts. The hymns are addressed to Mary and her Son, the native songs to the eagle, the supernatural thunder spirit, and to the clan totem, the sacred deer ancestor. The short, repetitious word phrases mean:

Ex. 3
Bineshiwok togoshonok
The birds are coming

Wasa bionjipawok
From far away they arrive

Ex. 4
Mano mano dimadja
Let, let him go

Wawashkeshe n'dodem
The deer, my pal (totem)

How did the Indians manage to accept a song type so different from their native repertoire, which to this day remains in a separate compartment? For lack of any memory of the transition, the explanation must be pried out of the few early documents,

particularly out of the *Jesuit Relations*, the reports written by the early missionaries for their superiors. Here is a brief reconstruction of the history.



In the wilderness around the Great Lakes the Blackrobes or Jesuit missionaries followed hard on the heels of the first explorers. They found a people whose religion consisted mainly in singing to the beating of drums. They sang in worship, recreation, and suffering.⁴ To the priests the religion appeared as superstition and the music as lacking in sweet harmony. Yet their approach was not entirely condemnatory. Many of the nature spirits were pronounced demons, but Jesus replaced the sun symbol, Mother Mary doubled for beloved Nokomis, grandmother Earth, and the cross replaced the prayer stick in thanksgiving sacrifices and the grave post with the upside-down image of the totem.⁵ Above all, hymns were taught to the children and through them to the adults. By 1644 Huron converts were enthusiastic over Christmas hymns⁶ and soon afterwards were harmonizing them in four voices.⁷ The native drum and flageolet found a counterpart in drum and fife music by French soldiers for the blessing of the bread.⁸

By 1672 the French Jesuits had made another diplomatic move in learning the native languages and translating the hymns into these tongues. Said Fr. Druillettes, pastor of the mission at Ste. Marie du Sault,

"They are assiduous in saying their prayers in the Church . . . and take pleasure in chanting beautiful hymns in their language."⁹

⁴ Edna Kenton, *The Jesuit Relations*, New York, 1925, pp. 58-9.

⁵ Henry R. Schoolcraft, *Information Respecting the Indian Tribes of the United States*, Philadelphia, 1852, pp. 49 and 60.

⁶ Reuben G. Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 73 Vols., Cleveland, 1896-1901, Vol. 25, pp. 113 and 211.

⁷ *ibid.*, Vol. 28, p. 249.

⁸ *ibid.*, Vol. 45, p. 131.

⁹ *ibid.*, Vol. 57, p. 207.

All of the many references are to plainsong, to Pange Lingua for the Sunday before Lent and Palm Sunday, the Magnificat, Te Deum, Miserere, Gloria Patri,¹⁰ and at a large intertribal council at the Sault, the Vexilla and Exaudiat.¹¹ Fr. Pierre Cholenec specified the 8th mode used in chanting a hymn to the Virgin.¹² In 1671 Fr. Louis André told of responsorial rendering of these chants at Manitulin Island, northern Lake Huron.

"No sooner had I begun to have these sung in the Chapel, accompanied by a sweet-toned flute . . . than they all came in crowds . . . so that . . . I let only the girls enter the Chapel . . . thus we sang in two choruses, those without responding to those within."¹³

The influence of this excellent musician and apt popularizer reached from Manitulin all across the Upper Peninsula to the Menomini Indians near Green Bay of present Wisconsin. His round trip concluded in Canada, after a year (1682) in St. Ignace. A description of his activities in the *Jesuit Relations* summarizes his approach, and also brings up two interesting points, that he had the children learn French airs and that he himself composed songs.

"The reason why he was so eagerly sought was found in certain spiritual songs that he was wont to have the children sing to French airs, which pleased these Savages extremely . . . This success . . . made him resolve to assail the men through the children, and to combat idolatry with souls of extreme innocence. In short, he composed songs against the superstitions that we have mentioned, and against the vices most opposed to Christianity; and after teaching the children to sing them to the accompaniment of a sweet toned flute, he went everywhere with these little Savage musicians, to declare war on Jugglers, Dreamers, and those who had several wives . . ."¹⁴

¹⁰ *ibid.*, Vol. 48, p. 231.

¹¹ *ibid.*, Vol. 55, pp. 107 ff. (report by Claude Allouez).

¹² *ibid.*, Vol. 60, p. 283.

¹³ *ibid.*, Vol. 55, p. 147.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, Vol. 56, pp. 129 ff.

1) Example 5

2) Ave maris stella Dei Mater alma Atque semper virgo Felix coela porte
 Jesus wegwissian Mo jag geie bekish Gegigangowii- an Kimino wini-go

3) $\text{♩} = 96$
 Kimi-no winigo

Je- sus weg-wis - si - - an No-
 jag gei - e be - kish Ga - - gi - gan - go - wi - an
 Ki - - mi-no wi - ni - go Ki - mi - no - wi - ni - go

Perhaps they sang melodies like those in *Jesus Wegwissian*, which enlists Jesus and Mary against the powers of darkness, though to-day the descendants use neither antiphony nor flute accompaniment. The text books name *Ave maris stella* as the air to these words. One of the versions which appears in the music book is indeed derived from *Ave maris*, though 1) in Ex. 5 is in the Aeolian or rather Hypo-Aeolian, minor mode, that is, the 8th (plagal) ecclesiastical mode; while 2) is in the Ionian mode, our major diatonic.¹⁵ Is the former the chant to the Virgin mentioned by Fr. Cholenec? Is the latter a modification by Fr. André or a mutation by the Indians in the course of centuries? Or is the third tune 3) the composition by Fr. André, or a derivation therefrom? This last, recorded by Thomas Shalifoe of Baraga, has been handed down from his half-French, half-Indian ancestors (his name is a corruption of Charlevoix). The tune, the most beautiful one in my collection, is in the Dorian mode.¹⁶ The Dorian mode persists in older French (and other European) folk songs, as in the French-Canadian voyageur song *V'la le bon vent*.¹⁷ Verses 1 and 4 emphasize the ideas of

¹⁵ Prud'homme and Desautels, *op. cit.*, p. 329 (no. 251) and p. 179 (no. 139), respectively.

¹⁶ Ethnic Folkways, New York, *op. cit.*, Side A, Band 3.

¹⁷ Marius Barbeau, *Alouette*, Montreal, 1946, p. 38.

allegiance to Jesus and Mary and abhorrence of dark (pagan) powers.

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Jesus wegwissian | Jesus who art the son |
| Mojag gaie bekish | Forever may you |
| Gagigangowian | Take care of me |
| Kiminowinigo. | So I will be happy. |
| 4. Marie, abiskon | Marie, deliver |
| Neta-betadidjig | The sinners, |
| Wassenemaw gaie | Remove indeed |
| Tebikadisidjig. | The powers of darkness. |

A similar problem involves the tunes to *Sagitoda Jesus wiiaw*, a hymn for Corpus Christi and the Eucharist. The text, to be sung "Sur l'air *Pange Lingua*," paraphrases the Latin original.

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Sagitoda Jesus wiiaw | Let us cherish Jesus' body |
| Ketchitwawendawadinig; | It is holy; |
| O miskwim manadjitoda, | His blood, let us glorify it, |
| Gasiginan apinassind, | He poured it when he was killed, |
| Kigisiginamagonan. | He poured it for us. |

Ex. 6, 1) and 2) reproduce the first two phrases of *Pange Lingua*, the plainchant, and the older version of *Sagitoda*, both in the Phrygian or 3rd mode.¹⁸ The L'Arbre Croche melody, 3), recorded by Kenosha, is equally removed from native song and plainchant. In the same major diatonic scale as Ex. 2, it has a more rigid form: a binary structure of four-measure phrases in march time, and a theme that rises sequentially in A and A¹ and descends in B and B¹. Its structure, phrasing, and very theme vividly recall the Austrian national anthem, composed by Joseph Haydn in 1797, "Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser", taken over later on by Germany for "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles."¹⁹

This is not the only hymn of L'Arbre Croche with an Austrian flavor. A hymn of thanksgiving, recorded by Jane Ettawageshik at a New Year feast of the Kishigos, appears as a legitimate variant of a folkdance known in Austria and Bavaria as "Siebensschritt" and in Czechoslovakia as "Four Steps". One need only compare the B part in Ex. 7, 1), with the second half of 2) Siebensschritt, 3) Four Steps,²⁰ and—4) Humperdinck's folk-

¹⁸ Prud'homme and Desautels, *op. cit.*, p. 319 (no. 243) and p. 146 (no. 112).

¹⁹ Clemens Schmalstich, *Das Deutsche Volkslied*, Berlin, n. d., p. 81.

²⁰ Anna Schley Duggan, *Folk Dances of European Countries*, New York, 1948, pp. 57 and 103.

2)
Example 6

2) Pange lingua glori-- o - si Cor - po - ris myste - ri - um -

3) Sagi-to - da Je-sus wii-aw Ki-tohitwa wendawa - - di-nig

Sa--gi-to-da Jeus wiiaw Kitchitwa wenda-wa - di-nig api - nesind

Kigi-si-gi nam-go-nan Tohibalati-gong ginbod Tohibalati-gong ginbod

1) $J = 96$ Example 7

Giji-gong an-jeni - dog Wi-ma-na-ji - a - da

B

Mamo-ya Wama-da Jesus egwa - shi-mining

2) $J = 152$

3) $J = 104$

4)

derived "Brüderlein, komm' tanz' mit mir!" The dance tunes are twice as fast as the hymn. Their ideology is quite different. The hymn says—

Gijigong anjenidog,
Wi-manadjiada
Jesus kijadisid
Mojag migwetch inada.
Chorus
Mamoya wamada,
Jesus egwashimining,
Mamoya wamada
Meno-jaweniminang.

In heaven the angels
Let us honor him,
Jesus is charitable
Always thanks you say to him.

Let us thank him,
Jesus who saves us,
Let us thank him
Who is good, merciful to us.

The transition from plainchant to French folk melody began in the seventeenth century. One can only suppose that this process continued through the eighteenth century, with inevitable changes. The *Jesuit Relations* dwindled and were not replaced by similarly accurate documents. In some areas the priests withdrew temporarily. But intense missionization resumed in the nineteenth century. The story of L'Arbre Croche Catholicism gives a plausible reason for a shift to Austrian folk songs, for it tells of a series of Austrian and German prelates, both Jesuit and Franciscan, from 1831 to 1889—Fr. Friedrich Baraga, the sympathetic Fr. Francis Pierz, Fr. Ignatius Mrak, compatriot of Baraga, Fr. Seraphim Zorn, Fr. Louis Sifferath, and the energetic Prussian Franciscan, Fr. Bernard Weikamp.²¹ The most important figure was Baraga, a Slovene, native of Carniola, who spent only 1831-1833 in L'Arbre Croche, but often returned during his ministrations in the Upper Peninsula, his founding of the mission at Baraga, and his functions as Bishop of Marquette and Sault Ste. Marie. Though not the first missionary to print hymn books,²² nor the first to learn the native languages and translate, he was the first to write a grammar, to advocate reading in the languages, and to widely popularize the hymns. His name is on many a battered title page.

It is very likely that he introduced folk tunes and anthems from his native land, which have persevered side by side with previous tunes. Though his activities were centered in the Upper Peninsula, they did not oust French influences of French prelates. At L'Arbre Croche the new Austrian tradition became firmly established under his successors. Till recently this tradition extended to the teaching of German in the convent school at Cross Village, so that Kenosha and his age mates speak German.

This localization of Austrian influence would account for much

²¹ Mary Belle Shurtleff, *Old Arbre Croche*, Cross Village, 1940, pp. 24-30. In a personal communication, Fr. Martin Gusinde remarked that the influence of Austrian Jesuits and Franciscans in North America was generally underestimated.

²² The Clements Library at the University of Michigan has a hymn book printed in 1830, with the title page bearing the name of "Dejean Macate Okonoye" (Dejean Blackrobe).

of the difference between the L'Arbre Croche and the more conservative Upper Peninsula, with its remnants of plainsong and its French tunes.

A search for more definite identification has led me to the perusal of dozens of folk song volumes and to the pestering of many a musicologist, all sympathetic but puzzled. It led me to a detour between Nahma and St. Ignace in a pouring rain to consult the colorful friend of the Indian, Fr. Prud'homme at the mission of St. Isaac Jogues outside Sault Ste Marie. Fr. Prud'homme had observed the French and Austrian folk song origins and supposed that somewhere the prototypes must be in print. A worthy successor to André and Baraga, he has covered the Upper Peninsula, has been concerned with the Indians and their music, and has worried little about origins.



Not all of the hymn tunes float in a three-century-old haze. Some are quite identifiable. In all locations a Christmas hymn is sung to the very same *Adeste Fideles* that resounds in our schools and churches. Even the words are as accurately translated as possible: "Enamiaieg (you who pray), Onaningwendamog, Ambe (rejoice, come)." It is so exact that it offers no challenge.

A hymn to the Virgin is set to the tune we know as "America," which was composed in 1743 by Henry Carey for "God Save the King," was fitted in 1781 to the Austrian "Heil, Kaiser Josef" and in 1793 to the German "Heil Dir im Siegerkranz."²³ There are other settings to the words, heard from two Ottawas, Whitney Albert of the Lower Peninsula and Margaret Lambert of the Upper Peninsula; but "America" is the favorite both in the printed music²⁴ and in the recording by Kenosha.

The text, which officially calls for "Sur l'air *Nous vous invoquons tous*", can be translated as follows—

²³ Schmalstich, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

²⁴ Prud'homme and Desautels, *op. cit.*, p. 230 (no. 175).

Wenidjanissimiiang
 Genawenimiiang
 Gwanatch Marie;
 Ganodamawishinam
 Kinwegimigoian
 Jawenimishinam
 Gwanatch Marie.

Treat us like your children
 Take care of us
 Gracious Mary;
 Speak for us
 We love you like our own mother
 Have mercy on us
 Gracious Mary.

Kenosha identified the tune as our national anthem. Nevertheless he digresses from the norm, expands some of the measures to 4/4 time instead of the correct 3/4. Such metric change, not uncommon among older Indian hymn singers, has two implications.

In the first place, it suggests perseverance of the Indian feel for metrical flexibility. Fifty years ago the oldtimers sang their hymns with many Indian mannerisms, such as slurs, pulsations, and an "Indian throat".²⁵ The youngsters of that era have all but shed these mannerisms, even in their native songs, but in both categories they show little concern for set time signatures.

In the second place, the slight deviations from a wellknown tune indicate possibilities of larger changes in more obscure melodies. As already mentioned, individual and local variations prevail in folk song. These hymns have all the earmarks of folk music. Since the time of Baraga they have inevitably changed. Perhaps identifiable at that time as Austrian folk songs, they have become transformed. Since the time of André the changes must have been even greater. The only tunes to resist such changes are the established and long printed chants and hymns of the church.²⁶

One would like to predict a picturesque future for the hymnody, under modern influences and with a new generation. But there can be no future. The new generation shows no interest in the native languages or traditions. Some exceptional youngsters chime in when the hymns are sung during intermission at public shows termed powwows. Already tossed from the church to the family gathering, the Ottawa hymns may continue for a

²⁵ Frederick R. Barton, *American Primitive Music*, New York, 1909, pp. 136-37.

²⁶ Reproduced by the Society of St. John the Evangelist in *Liber Usualis*, Tournai, Belgium, 1934, and discussed by John Julian in *A Dictionary of Hymnology*, London, 1892.

short while as secular entertainment, alongside the once religious native songs. But they are rapidly disappearing. With them will vanish an interesting transitional stage, a blend of native and European art and custom.

AFRICAN "POWERS" IN TRINIDAD: THE SHANGO CULT*

FRANCES MISCHEL
University of Colorado
Extension Division

It is the purpose of this paper to describe some of the ceremonial activities and deities of a large Afro-American Negro cult group found in Trinidad, British West Indies. The Shango Cult in Trinidad,¹ whose membership consists of lower class Negroes, is historically derived from the complex of religious beliefs found among the Yoruba people of Nigeria. Its religious system is syncretic. That is, elements of Catholicism have become fused with native African beliefs. This is most striking in the identification of African gods with Catholic Saints, e.g., Shango, the Yoruba god of thunder, has become identified with St. John the Baptist. Similar syncretic belief systems have been described in Haiti,² Brazil,³ and Cuba⁴.

* The research upon which this paper is based was conducted in Trinidad during the months of June to September, 1956. The author and her husband, Walter Mischel, a clinical psychologist, collaborated on a joint interdisciplinary study of the Shango cult. Thanks are due to the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, Inc., whose aid in the form of a Pre-Doctoral Fellowship made this research possible. The author acknowledges the help and cooperation of the Dept. of Sociology-Anthropology, Ohio State University, and especially of Drs. John W. Bennett and Erika Bourguignon.

¹ There are, according to rough estimates, 100 Shango "palais" in rural and urban Trinidad. Of these, one major group, which includes 24 leaders, each with their own establishment, was selected as a framework for study. Six leaders with their following were intensively studied.

² M. J. Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, New York, 1937; and "African Gods and Catholic Saints in New World Negro Beliefs," *American Anthropologist*, 39:635-643, 1937. G. Simpson, "The Vodun Service in Northern Haiti," *American Anthropologist*, 42:236-254, 1940; and "The Belief System of Haitian Vodun," *American Anthropologist*, 47:35-56, 1945.

³ A. Ramos, *The Negro in Brazil* (trans. by R. Pattee) Washington, 1949. D. Pierson, *Negroes in Brazil, A Study of Race Contact at Bahia*, Chicago, 1942. M.J. Herskovits, "The Southernmost Outposts of New World Africanisms," *American Anthropologist*, 45:495-510, 1943.

⁴ W. Bascom, "The Focus of Cuban Santeria," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 6:64-68, 1950. F. Ortiz, *Los Negros Brujos*, Madrid, 1917. (A more complete bibliography is to be found in: M.J. Herskovits: "The Present Status and Needs of Afro-American Research," *Journal of Negro History*, 36:123-147, 1951).

The Ceremonials

The ceremonials, called "feasts" or "sacrifices," take place in the courtyard of the leader's home. The courtyard is composed of the leader's house, a separate kitchen or cook-house, the "palais," "chapelle," and the "tombs." The "palais" is an area of approximately thirty feet by thirty feet with a palm thatched or "carrat" roof, supported by four or more upright log beams planted in the ground. Here the major part of the ceremony takes place. The beams are interconnected by rough boards reaching about one-third of the distance from ground to thatching. The boards, serving as partial walls about five feet in height, have extensions built into the "palais" area. These board extensions serve as benches for the spectators. In two corners of the structure there is an opening serving as a door.

The "chapelle" is a small (approximately ten feet by ten feet) one or two room "church" with wattle and daub or wooden walls; the ground consists of packed or flattened earth. The "chapelle" is generally located near the "palais" and contains altars, lithographs of the saints, and the implements used by the gods. There are usually three to five altars dedicated to various important gods which contain both Catholic and African symbols. Crosses, rosaries, colorful holy statues, as well as thunderstones (Carib or Arawak celts), obi seeds and axes are mingled in profusion. On the walls are hung chromolithographs of the saints. Scattered in corners and on the earthen floor are the various implements of the gods. On feast days large colored flags are hung in the "chapelle."

Near the gate or entrance to the courtyard (or, in some cases, scattered about the "chapelle") is a small secluded area. Here the "tombs" (also called "stools, pere-oguns" or "memorial stones") to the saints are placed. There are five to seven such "tombs" dedicated to the major gods. These are generally flat, raised, cement platforms (but sometimes merely mounds of earth) on which are placed candles, flowers, pottery jugs, bottles of olive oil and other sacred items. Protruding from the center of each "tomb" is an implement which is associated with the particular god. When these are metal they are charred

or burned. Two of the gods (Ogun-St. Michael and Shakpana-St. Jerome), and sometimes the others as well, have flags of their sacred color set on long bamboo poles waving over their "tombs." One god, Shakpana-St. Jerome has a forked branch with a burned pottery jug resting in the fork implanted in his "tomb."

The leader, known in some areas as the "mamba," gives a major feast once a year, during the period between June to the end of September, generally on some particular saint's day. The feast begins on a Tuesday evening and continues essentially uninterrupted until the final animal sacrifice on Saturday morning. Following an interval of one week another feast is held from Wednesday evening until Saturday morning. This is known as "the return," and is explained as: "when you give somebody something, it's nice to get a return." Occasionally some leaders give one or two day feasts to commemorate special events at odd times during the year, e.g., on New Year's day.

A typical feast begins at about 8 P.M. Approximately 25-50 people are seated in the "palais" on rough wooden benches and a comparable number are circulating about the courtyard. At this time the atmosphere is rather casual, e.g., people are joking with each other, renewing friendships, eating dinner, playing with children and the like. Despite the mood of jocularity, there is an air of tenseness and waiting. Occasionally a few people in the "palais" begin singing with or without the accompaniment of the drums. At about 10 o'clock, the leader enters, frequently holding a rosary and a candle in his hand, and kneels in the center of the "palais." He begins chanting the Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary's, sometimes the Catholic Litany of the Saints, and other Catholic prayers. He recites line by line as the audience chants antiphonally following him. At times he interrupts the prayers to sprinkle water from a pottery jug into the four corners of the "palais." The same prayers are constantly repeated and the entire prayer period may last as long as two hours. During this time more and more people stream into the "palais." As the prayer period comes to an end a hymn may or may not be sung, depending in large part upon

the whim of the leader. After this, one man, whose role is that of a "servant to the powers," places a candle, flanked by two calabashes containing water and ashes respectively, into the center of the "palais." A line of olive oil is drawn about it by slowly pouring the oil from a bottle. The drummers, three in number, and the *chac-chac* players enter and seat themselves at one end of the "palais;" the leader is in front of them, often resting on a chair. He begins the first song to Eschu, the devil. The drums pick up the beat and the audience begins singing. At the same time a circle of roughly 20 people, mostly women, forms. The women begin to dance in a slow shuffle around the candle and calabash.

Seven songs are sung to Eschu and each new song is marked by a reversal of the dancing circle. At the conclusion of the sixth song the candle and calabashes are thrown out by the same "servant of the powers." This circle procedure is known as "getting rid of the devil" or "giving him his due." Immediately following the last song to Eschu, singing begins to Ogun, who is identified as St. Michael, the leading deity in the Shango pantheon. At least seven songs must be sung to Ogun to equal the number sung to the devil, because "the saints are higher than the devil." Usually, after three or four songs to Ogun, the first possession manifesting the characteristics ascribed to Ogun begins. Generally a woman dancing in the circle begins violently swaying back and forth. Her eyes become glazed and dilated, her face undergoes a radical transformation, becoming quite masculine, with lips and chin protruding. She falls back and is supported by several bystanders, thereby breaking the circle of dancers. Singing and drumming stop for the moment. One bystander ties a red (Ogun's color) head band about the possessed woman's head, another ties a sash underneath her stomach, and her jewelry and shoes are removed. During this dressing period the possessed woman is held by others so that the god or "power" may be dressed properly and given a chance to "settle." The "power" then breaks away and begins dancing in the "palais." Meanwhile the drumming and singing have been continuing. At times the "power"

may run into the "chapelle" and kneel on the floor, or run to the "tomb" area or anywhere about the courtyard. The "power" calls for his implements, a sword or cutlass in Ogun's case, and dances with them. Especially Ogun greets the audience, generally in a mixture of English and Patois, e.g., "Bon Soir, tout monde, good-night all." He may bless all present by distributing olive oil either to drink or to be rubbed onto the head and face. The singing to Ogun continues until either Ogun decides that he has had enough songs or until the leader sings to another power.⁵ After the arrival of Ogun-St. Michael, different powers "manifest" upon other individuals.⁶

Most active Shango participants have one or more special patrons who "manifest" upon them regularly. Such individuals are termed "horses," or "saint horses" and identified as "she St. Michael horse," or "she take Michael," "Michael manifest on her." The more patrons one has, the greater the prestige so that the leaders can and do "take any power."

Singing, drumming, and spirit possessions continue until three to five o'clock in the morning. The duration depends to some degree upon general fatigue and tiredness. People then go to sleep for a few hours, finding themselves berths anywhere in the courtyard. When dawn comes, activities begin again. Selected animals are washed and sacrificed to the powers, with the accompaniment of drums, at sunrise. The killing, preceded by the casting of obi seeds to determine if the powers will accept the sacrifice, takes place in the "chapelle" and the blood of the animals is splashed over the "tombs." More drum beating and spirit possession may take place following the sacrifice until about 10 o'clock in the morning. People who have regular jobs leave sometime in the morning and return again the following evening. Most of the women remain and spend the day cooking the sacrificed animals. Some food is cooked without salt and

⁵ Supposedly the order of singing is from Ogun-St. Michael, Omela-Mother of the earth, Omira-Raphael, Gabriel (no African counterpart), Shakpana-St. Jerome, Osain-St. Francis, Shango-St. John, to Aireelay-St. Jonah. In actual fact, however, the singing order is quite flexible and almost any power can be sung to at any time with the exception of Eschu and Ogun at the beginning.

⁶ Possessions observed ranged from 2 to 24 in one evening.

this is offered to the powers on large leaves, in front of their particular "tombs." The rest, cooked with salt, is eaten by the participants.

Occasionally, during the late afternoon, one of the water powers may "manifest" upon his or her "horse" and call for a special river ceremony. Then a procession, sometimes dressed in white, marches to the river. Food is placed on the banks of the river and singing and drumming to the particular water power takes place. (Note: this only occurs when the leader's courtyard is situated near a river.) At approximately the same time on the next evening the entire ceremonial begins again.

Shango Cosmology

The gods or "powers" with whom the Shango cult or "orisha workers," as they prefer to be called, deal, inhabit the heaven and are called "heavenly powers." Other powers exist, but these are the powers of darkness and evil and inhabit the "nether" regions. In talking about evil powers, one leader said:

"It have plenty. Not here, you know. It have its place—circle work Joe Steele, Skull and Crossbones, Prince of Darkness. It have plenty who say giving Shango dance, but call evil. They do all kinds of wrong, say they do Orisha work, but use the black hand."

Occasionally during a feast such an evil spirit may appear despite the fact that he has not been summoned. These evil spirits are then exorcised by the major heavenly powers, usually Ogun-St. Michael. Groups working with these supposed evil powers are greatly feared. There appears to be a relationship between the familiarity of the "horse" to the group and this interpretation. Thus, unfamiliar "horses" were frequently accused of manifesting evil spirits or non-recognized powers.

The powers are conceived as leading ordinary lives in heaven. Indeed, it seemed that the powers are looked upon as if they lived on earth, "always around working." While, theoretically, they live in heaven, the concept of heaven as home for the powers is vague and nebulous. The powers may arrive with or without being summoned, especially in the latter case, when they have "work to do." The nature of this work, aside from

dancing at feasts, appears to be diagnosing and suggesting cures for ills and delivering messages to "warn of something going wrong or something going happen." The specific behavior of a power is said to be a function of what activity he or she was engaged in at the time of being summoned. For example, if Ebejee-St. Peter calls for a dagger when he arrives this means that he has been fishing. If, however, he calls for a key, he has just been opening or closing the heavenly gate. Similarly, Ogun-St. Michael will call for a cutlass if he has merely been protecting heaven and his dancing and activity will be relatively subdued. If he has been fighting he will call for a sword and dance violently and behave aggressively.⁷

The powers can "manifest" on any person. Generally a "horse" will have one or two special patrons who regularly manifest upon him. Indeed, a power is recognized after his arrival not so much by his behavior, but by the regularity of the manifestation on the same "horse." The powers are free to choose their "horses" and very frequently individuals become "overshadowed" with a power. They do not fall into the deep trancelike state of active spirit possession but may become dizzy, fall down, or shake violently for a few moments and then return to normal. When this occurs it is said to be a power trying to find a "horse" to settle upon. This may happen, for example, to two or three individuals at the same time and then a fourth individual may suddenly become completely possessed. In order to receive a power the "horse" must be "living clean." By this is meant sexual abstention and no drinking two to three days prior to and during the feast and a generally religious and non-evil outlook. Rejected individuals, i.e. those who do not "catch power," are assumed to have lived "unclean," and are considered "not proper horses."

At the time of first possession, or when a person first "falls under a power," the leader of the "palais" in which this event takes place interprets to the new horse the name of the god who possesses him. The behavior of a newly possessed person is

⁷ The personality correlates of this behavior "choice" will be discussed in a subsequent paper.

erratic. For example, he may call for several conflicting implements, or use different dance steps. When this occurs it is said that several powers are competing for the new "horse," i.e., one power says to the other: "see what a nice new horse I have." The other powers become jealous and attempt to compete for possession of the new "horse."

The powers are said to come in threes. Thus, for example, three individuals may simultaneously be possessed by Shango-St. John. However, each is possessed by a different form of St. John, e.g., the Baptist, the Evangelist, and of the Cross. While, abstractly, this is supposed to occur with all powers, it was noted that only John and Francis have multiple manifestations, as might be expected in view of the fact that the several Saints bearing these names respectively are particularly well-known.

The majority of Orisha worshippers have little knowledge concerning the African origins of the powers. The major leaders and a handful of active participants (those who become possessed frequently) are able to cite African names; the rest seem more comfortable referring to and following the Catholic saints. Informants spontaneously talk about the saints rather than the African gods. To illustrate this point, one major leader was asked if Shango and Oya were married. His reply was "St. John the Baptist never married."

On the whole, most of the participants are primarily concerned with the feasting, singing, drumming, and possession aspects of the ceremonies and indicate little knowledge of, or concern with, the theology underlying the practices which they accept and share unquestioningly.

The Shango "Powers."

In the following section the major deities of the cult and their characteristics, implements, days, sacrifices, and sacred colors are listed. Since there is a great deal of variation in Shango theology from group to group, as Herskovits has also recorded for Haiti, this listing records those identifications and characteristics heard most often.⁸ This variation may also ac-

⁸ Herskovits: "African Gods and Catholic Saints . . .", p. 636.

count for the discrepancies between this list and a similar one constructed for Trinidad.⁹

Ogun

Christian Counterpart: St. Michael. *Characteristics:* god of war and iron; highest deity in the Shango pantheon since he is the "chief angel." He is so powerful that "he can move mountains." Ogun is generally the first power to arrive and it is said that no power can arrive before him at a feast. In practice, however, another power can arrive first but the reason is then given that Michael used another power as a messenger, being too busy to come himself. His behavior is generally aggressive; he does a good deal of violent dancing, using large steps, with his hands on his hips. Much of his time is spent in diagnosing ailments and solving problems. He used great quantities of olive oil which he distributes as blessings or scatters about the "palais." He most frequently "manifests" on large, stout women.

Implement: cutlass; sword when angry. *Color:* red, white. *Day:* Wednesday. *Food:* goat, black eyed peas, rice, corn, rum.

Osain

Christian Counterpart: St. Francis. *Characteristics:* god of the jungle and bush, an herbalist or "bush doctor." He has three manifestations: Osain Kiribejii, identified as St. Francis of Assisi; Osain Demolay, identified as St. Francis Xavier; and Osain Metaphi who is known simply as St. Francis. He is a quiet power. One form of Francis dances bent at the waist, using a slow shuffle step. Another walks on his toes, sometimes with a candle lit at both ends clamped between his teeth. Occasionally, he throws himself to the ground and rolls on the earth. He "manifests" on both men and slim, young women.

⁹ Herskovits, M. J. & F. S., *Trinidad Village*, New York, 1947. Appendix I, "Notes on Shango Worship," pp. 331 and 332-333.

Aireelay
(Ajaja)

Implement: pessie (thick vine); "checheray broom;" lance; turtle carapace. For Osain Kiribejii: "checheray broom;" Osain Demolay: cross; Osain Metaphi: candle lit at both ends in mouth.

Color: yellow. *Day:* Thursday. *Food:* Muracoy (land turtle), black eyed peas, rice, corn.

Christian Counterpart: "St." Jonah. *Characteristics:* "master of the sea." He has two names because Jonah "died twice." He is revered as a "grim, serious man, no time for play." He paces back and forth with his hands on his hips or behind his back. When he dances, he throws his feet forward and spins on one heel. He is very authoritative and generally delivers a sermon or gives various orders, e.g., to clean the "palais." He is called by many "the crab." Only three Aireelay "horses" were observed, two men and one woman. (Part of the reverence and fear which this power inspires is due to the fact that the chief Shango leader throughout Trinidad is an "Aireelay horse.")

Implement: bamboo rod called "roseau;" dagger; great deal of olive oil.

Color: blue, mauve belt. *Day:* Thursday. *Food:* guinea bird, black eyed peas, rice, corn.

Shakpana
(Zewo, although the latter is sometimes considered to be the son of Shakpana and identified with St. Vincent de Paul)

Christian Counterpart: St. Jerome. *Characteristics:* This power "gets rid of evil and disease." He does little dancing, his activity is confined to pacing about swishing his broom. When he "manifests" upon a woman, a red dress is worn. This is tied between the legs to form trousers. He is feared by some people because of his connection with disease, evil and prophecy. *Implement:* "checheray broom"

Color: red. *Day:* none. *Food:* cock, pigeon, black eyed peas, rice, corn.

Shango

Christian Counterpart: St. John the Baptist.
Characteristics: Is the god of lightening and thunder. He does little in the ritual other than dancing actively. He uses large steps and waves his arms, swinging his axe above his head. He is the only power who is "fed." At odd intervals, Friday night, 24 small bits of cotton are rolled to form small balls, put on a plate, drenched with olive oil and lighted. The power then swallows this mixture. Only one specific Shango "horse" performs this feat currently.

Implement: axe, pessie, cross. For Shango (John the Baptist) axe; Allado (John the Evangelist) pessie; Amado Shango (John of the Cross) cross.

Color: white, red. *Day:* Friday. *Food:* Sheep, black eyed peas, rice, corn.

Aba Koso

Christian counterpart: St. John the Baptist after beheading. *Characteristics:* The activity of this power is limited to pacing and stamping about with hands on hips. He grunts and groans continually, all the while shaking his head which is thrown back. The grunting indicates that he has no head and is thus unable to talk. This makes him seem angry and "vexed" and he is often not taken seriously by other people. Only two people, both young men, were observed to be Aba Koso "horses."

Implement: usually none, sometimes the axe. *Color:* red, *Day:* Friday, *Food:* usually no sacrifice.

**Aba Lofa or
Elofa**

Christian counterpart: Eternal Father or "God himself." *Characteristics:* This power is another patron of the chief Shango leader and is much revered. He comes only at this leaders' own feast since the latter is the only known Aba Lofa Horse in Trinidad. Occasionally, if at another feast, a cattle has been sacrificed and if the big leader is present, Aba Lofa may "manifest"

upon him. This power does not "manifest" suddenly but comes with a slow gradual shaking of the head. This becomes faster and faster, the hands are clasped and eyes closed. As the power comes the "horse" rises but keeps the hands clasped and the eyes closed. The power is an old man and must walk slowly and haltingly, sometimes with a cane. He dresses in white trousers, white shirt, white headband and a white bed sheet which is draped over the shoulders to form a cloak. He dances slowly, manipulating the cloak about him and holds a freshly killed cattle head on his own head. After a while, he holds the cattle head in the crook of his arm and dabs blood on the heads of all people present as a blessing. He also holds a ritual for children, which generally takes place on the third evening. Huge loaves of specially baked bread are brought out of the Chapelle and are distributed in small pieces by Aba Lofa to all children present.

Implement: stick or cane, cattle head, 3 candles, bottle of oil. *Color:* white. *Day:* Monday or Tuesday. *Food:* beef or sometimes a whole cattle, black eyed peas, rice, corn.

Omira

Christian Counterpart: St. Raphael. *Characteristics:* This power is sacred to hunters and is more important as a chief archangel than as a hunter. He does little dancing, but generally walks about carrying a wooden gun. He dresses in a pink and lilac colored dress, carrying a hamsack "for his lunch," over his shoulder and sometimes a "flambeau," a candle in his hand, since "hunters need a light."

Implement: gun, candle, hamsack. *Color:* pink and lilac. *Day:* Wednesday. *Food:* fowl, black eyed peas, rice, corn.

Ebejee

Christian Counterpart: St. Peter. *Characteristics:* He is a fisherman. As is the case with Raphael, he is more important in Christian terms than as an African deity. He is especially revered by one of the leaders who calls Peter her chief patron. She is the only individual who manifested this power.

Implement: keys, dagger, may wear a crown of leaves on head. *Color:* red, yellow, mauve. *Day:* none. *Food:* drake, black eyed peas, rice, corn.

Yemanja
(Amanja, Manja)

Christian Counterpart: St. Anne. *Characteristics:* Is a water power and lives in the sea. This power is either "saintly," e.g., simply walks about praying and blessing people or quite actively going through the maneuvers of rowing a boat. This is done by sitting on the ground and sliding across it while at the same time, she carries a calabash of water in one hand and a "pa-gye" or oar with which she imitates the motion of rowing in the other. Yemanja is considered to be one of the most powerful of the female deities.

Implements: oar, calabash of water. *Color:* blue and white. *Day:* Thursday. *Food:* duck, pullet, peas, rice.

Oya

Christian Counterpart: St. Catherine. *Characteristics:* She "lives in the air and comes with the breeze." Oya is closely identified with Shango and some individuals speak of them as married. She does a good deal of vigorous dancing, which looks very similar to the dancing of Shango and occasionally holds her left ear when dancing. This is interpreted as "listening to the breeze."

Implement: hatchet. *Color:* green, red *Day:* Friday. *Food:* fowl, pidgeon, peas, rice and corn. (the only female power who is offered corn, but her active vigorous behavior re-

semples that of the masculine powers more so than that of the females).

Oshun

Christian Counterpart: St. Philomen. *Characteristics:* This deity is a river goddess and "lives in the river." Her dancing is very delicate and often she balances a filled goblet (pottery jug) of water on her head without a head pad and dances with it for as long as 30 minutes without spilling its contents. At special river ceremonies, Oshun wades into the water and offers food to the river. (At one such ceremony, the food which is placed in a calabash drifted out onto the water and could not be recovered, as it normally is. This was interpreted as the will of Oshun who was angry at not receiving enough sacrifices.) She is considered by some to be the female counterpart of Aireelay.

Implement: anchor, goblet. *Color:* blue and white. *Day:* Thursday. *Food:* fowl, pidgeon, black eyed peas, rice.

Omela
(Mama Latay)

Christian Counterpart: Mother of the Earth. This deity is supposed to accompany Ogun-St. Michael, and is generally sung to after Ogun. She does not dance but sits on her knees and slides across the floor distributing water in a calabash to the people present and to the four corners of the "palais." She is supposedly an old, stooped woman.

Implement: calabash of water. *Color:* brown. *Day:* Wednesday. *Food:* ground provisions (potatoes, etc.).

Lesser known powers or those who "manifest" rarely are listed below:¹⁰

Bayanni (St. Anthony) *Implement:* three candles, bottle of oil.

Oromeelay (St. Joseph) *Implement:* carpenter square.

¹⁰ For these powers very little information concerning their habits was known. Their manifestations with the exception of Mahabil was never observed.

Mayadu (St. Theresa) *Implement*: crucifix, flowers. *Color*: brown, blue.

Da Lua (St. Jude).

Da Logee (St. Simon). These two (Da Lua and Da Loges) are "twins."

Obatala (Mary).

Abatala (Jesus).

Zooah (St. Benedict).

Ojah (St. Mark).

Ajakba (Mother of all Nations).

Mahabil (St. Michael). This power is recognized by only one Shango leader who calls him the "Indian King." He was an Indian god who was met by Christ in India and baptized as St. Michael. In behavior he is similar to Ogun, uses the sword or cutlass and dresses similarly. He has an altar and a "tomb" in the establishment of this one leader, but is not recognized outside of her immediate circle.



